

IN THE CLAIMS:

We claim:

1. – 17. (Cancelled)

18. (Amended) A method for linkage of de-identified records, comprising:

obtaining client de-identified records, the client de-identified records comprising field-level encrypted match codes, wherein the field-level encrypted match codes include at least one identification data field that is encoded prior to one-way encryption;

providing a database of master de-identified records, the master de-identified records comprising field-level encrypted match codes;

comparing the match codes of the client de-identified records and the master de-identified records; and

linking at least a portion of the client de-identified records with the master de-identified records using comparison of the match codes.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18 further comprising assigning identification codes to the master de-identified records.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 further comprising appending the identification codes of the master de-identified records to the client de-identified records.

21. – 25. (Cancelled)

26. (Amended) A system that links de-identified records, comprising:

a server computer that obtains client de-identified records, wherein the client de-identified records comprise first field-level encrypted match codes; and

a database that stores a plurality of master de-identified records, wherein the master de-identified records comprise second field-level encrypted match codes,

wherein the server computer is adapted to compare the first field-level encrypted match codes and the second field-level encrypted match codes and link at least a portion of the client

de-identified records with the master de-identified records based on a comparison of the first field-level encrypted match codes and the second field-level encrypted match codes, wherein at least one field-level encrypted match code includes at least one identification data field that is encoded prior to one-way encryption.

27. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26 wherein the server computer is further adapted to probabilistically link said at least a portion of the client de-identified records with the master de-identified records.

28. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26 further comprising a table used to facilitate a link of said at least a portion of the client de-identified records with the master de-identified records.

29. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 26 wherein the server computer comprises a communication interface used to receive the client de-identified records from one or more client computers.

30. (Amended) A system that links de-identified records, comprising:  
a database that stores a plurality of master de-identified records; and  
a server communicatively coupled to the database to link at least a portion of client de-identified records with the master de-identified records based on a comparison of match codes, wherein the match codes include at least one identification data field that is encoded prior to one-way encryption.

31. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 30 further comprising a table used to facilitate a link of said at least a portion of the client de-identified records with the master de-identified records.

32. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 30 wherein the match codes are encrypted.

33. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 30 wherein the server comprises an interface to receive the client de-identified records from a plurality of client computers.

34. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 30 wherein the server is adapted to compare match codes of the master de-identified records with match codes of the client de-identified records.

35. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 30 wherein the master de-identified records comprise assigned identification codes.

36. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 35 wherein the server is further configured to append the assigned identification codes to the client de-identified records.

37. (Amended) A system that links de-identified records, comprising:

means for obtaining client de-identified records, the client de-identified records comprising field-level encrypted match codes, wherein the field-level encrypted match codes include at least one identification data field that is encoded prior to one-way encryption;

means for providing a database of master de-identified records, the master de-identified records comprising field-level encrypted match codes;

means for comparing the match codes of the client de-identified records and the master de-identified records; and

means for linking at least a portion of the client de-identified records with the master de-identified records using comparison of the match codes.

38. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 37 further comprising means for assigning identification codes to the master de-identified records.

39. (Amended) The system of claim ~~37~~38 further comprising means for appending the identification codes of the master de-identified records to the client de-identified records.

40. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 37 wherein at least one of the client de-identified records has a personal identification data field that is encoded with a seed value to provide seed value identifiers.

41. (Amended) A method for linkage of de-identified records, comprising:  
receiving client de-identified records;  
comparing match codes of the client de-identified records with match codes of master de-identified records, wherein the field-level encrypted match codes include at least one identification data field that is encoded prior to one-way encryption; and  
linking at least a portion of the client de-identified records with the master de-identified records in response to comparing the match codes of the client de-identified records with match codes of master de-identified records.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 further comprising assigning identification codes to the master de-identified records.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 further comprising appending the identification codes of the master de-identified records to the client de-identified records.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the match codes of the client de-identified records are encrypted.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein linking at least a portion of the client de-identified records with the master de-identified records comprises probabilistically linking said at least a portion of the client de-identified records with the master de-identified records.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 further comprising appending identification codes of the master de-identified records to the client de-identified records.